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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000054

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DHS FOR JOHN SERIGHT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF INTERIOR ON DEPORTEES, ELECTIONS,
CHANTAL COLLE, AND POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: A. OKEDIJI/SERIGHT MARCH 14 EMAIL

[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0162

[1](#)C. CONAKRY 0023

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. During a March 28 meeting with the Charge, the Minister of Interior and Security said that the Guinean Government wants to establish a bilateral agreement with the U.S. in order to regulate extradition cases, such as those pending for 40 Guineans awaiting deportation in the U.S. The minister also commented on elections issues, the possibility of a labor strike on Monday, and his perspective on the Chantal Colle affair. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On March 28, Charge met with the Ministry of Interior and Security, Beau Keita, to discuss concerns over lack of documentation for about 40 Guineans awaiting deportation back to Guinea from the United States. Charge used the opportunity to discuss several other issues as well. Poloff and Pol intern were also present. About 15 minutes into the meeting, the Minister of Mines joined, but did not say anything during the discussion.

WE NEED AN EXTRADITION CONVENTION

[1](#)3. (SBU) With respect to the deportation issue (Ref A), Keita said that the Guinean Government wants to establish a bilateral agreement with the United States in order to regulate these types of situations. Charge said that the deportees would only arrive in small groups of one or two individuals, rather than as a large group, which could attract media attention. Keita said that such small groups should be acceptable, but that a bilateral convention is still desirable. He acknowledged that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes the lead on extradition issues, but that the Ministry of Interior would do a technical review of any draft convention.

NOTHING WILL HAPPEN ON MONDAY

[1](#)4. (SBU) Charge asked about the March 31 union deadline and the potential for civil unrest. Keita said that we will have absolutely no problems.⁸ He repeatedly emphasized that there will be no activity, but that if on the off chance there is, the ministry will respond accordingly to maintain

security. When Charge mentioned underlying economic difficulties and general tensions among the population, Keita was unconcerned. He said that &everyone knows the fuel prices have to go up, and that high prices on goods are linked to high international prices.⁸

CO-MANAGING ELECTIONS

¶5. (SBU) Turning to elections, Poloff asked the minister whether a decision had been made regarding whether a national identification card would be required in addition to a voter registration card in order for a citizen to be eligible to vote in the upcoming elections. Keita said that the issue had not yet been decided, but that the electoral code stipulates that a national identification card is required. He said that it is an important debate and he wants all interested parties to participate in order to ensure an acceptable decision for all. Keita added that he is having such a debate organized in the coming weeks. According to the minister, if everyone agrees that a national identification card is not needed, he will follow their will, even though it would not conform exactly to the law.

¶6. (SBU) Charge noted that the Minister had recently established a committee for co-managing elections, with representatives from both the ministry and the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI). Keita confirmed that the committee will have five members each from the ministry and the CENI. As to why the committee was needed, he said that there are several bodies working on elections within the ministry, but they only meet once a month. The minister said that he set up the new committee, which is

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supposed to meet at least three times a week, in order to facilitate frequent and effective collaboration.

NO COMMENT ON CONTROVERSIAL PREFECT

¶7. (SBU) When Charge asked whether the new prefect of Kindia had taken office (ref B), Keita said that he has been there for some time now. He did not offer further commentary.

THE CHANTAL COLLE AFFAIR

¶8. (C) In response to a question about the Chantal Colle affair (ref C), Keita said that there have been absolutely no repercussions. He explained that Colle had broken the law by defaming the prime minister. According to the minister, when Colle was brought before the court, she lied even though there was a recording of the controversial press conference, which the ministry kept as evidence. Keita said that Colle would have normally been sent to jail, but that he decided to deport her because she was a woman and he did not want to imprison her. He added that Colle had let her Guinean passport expire while her French passport was still current, indicating that she preferred her French citizenship, so he sent her back to France. &She was here to destabilize the country and that is why she held that press conference,⁸ he said. When the Charge asked if the First Lady was involved, Keita shrugged his shoulders and said &I don't know.⁸

COMMENT

¶9. (C) Keita was not particularly forthcoming on the political questions and some of his responses suggest that he was intentionally disingenuous. His conviction that the population will accept fuel and other price increases because

they understand world markets and the country's economic situation conflicts with what most other contacts have told embassy officials. He also was not especially convincing when he said he did not know if the First Lady was involved in the Chantal Cole case. Keita,s justification for Colle,s deportation raises many questions with respect to rights of expression, justice, etc.

¶10. (C) With respect to the deportation issue, the minister does not appear to be distinguishing between deportation and extradition since extradition is usually done under some kind of convention while deportation is relatively straightforward. Charge did not push the issue since he and RSO had already met earlier in the week with a contact at the ministry of foreign affairs, who agreed to work with us to resolve the issue. END COMMENT.
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